

<b>Children and Young People Select Committee</b>		
Title	Ofsted Inspection of 'Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers'	
Contributor	Stephen Kitchman, Director of Children's Social Care	Item 4 (Supplement)
Class	Part 1 (open)	01 March 2016

### **Reason for lateness and urgency**

The report has not been available for 5 clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for despatch on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 because senior officers needed to clarify some key details of the improvement plan. The report cannot wait until the next meeting as the local authority must prepare and forward an Improvement Plan to Ofsted within 70 days from the date of publication of the inspection report, which was on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### **1. Summary and purpose**

1.1 An Ofsted inspection of 'Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers' was undertaken in Lewisham between 26 October 2015 – 20 November 2015. This report gives an overview of the main findings, grading and subsequent action being taken as a result of this inspection. This report should be read alongside the full inspection report, together with the inspection report on the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board; attached as Appendix A. Both reports are also available on [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/lewisham](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/lewisham). The Improvement Plan which addresses the inspection report recommendations is attached as Appendix B.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that members:

- Note the Inspection report, findings and associated recommendations
- Comment on the draft Lewisham Improvement plan which responds to the inspection findings (Appendix B) which is scheduled to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet later this month.

### **3. Policy context**

3.1 The purpose of an Ofsted inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. This inspection was conducted under s136 Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3.2 The proposals within this report are consistent with the Council's corporate priorities as set out in the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020. In particular, the proposals relate to the Council's priorities regarding young people's Achievement and Involvement, Protection of Children and Community Leadership and Empowerment. The proposals are also in line with the Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 and the four outcomes of building resilience, staying safe, being healthy and action and raising achievement and attainment.

## **4. Background**

### **4.1 Overview of inspection**

4.1.1 An Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers was undertaken in Lewisham between 26 October 2015 – 20 November 2015. The framework for this inspection was first used in 2014 and was subsequently updated in October 2015. The Inspection was conducted as part of a 3 year cycle of inspection and was undertaken over a period of 4 weeks by a team of 7 of Her Majesty's inspectors and 1 Quality Assurance manager. The Inspection consisted of data analysis, documentation review, observation, file audits, focus groups and individual meetings with children and young people, Local authority staff and partner agencies.

4.1.2 The full Ofsted report was published at the same time as the Inspection report of the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The Inspection Framework allows for 4 potential judgements, Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate, the specific areas judged are outlined below with the overall inspection grading.

4.1.3 The judgements for Lewisham were made in the 3 categories and 2 sub categories as follows:

- Overall grading – Requires Improvement
- Children who need help & protection – Requires Improvement
- Children Looked After & Achieving permanence - Good
  - Adoption – Good
  - Care Leavers – Good
- Leadership, management & Governance – Requires Improvement

4.1.4 This inspection outcome represented a change from the judgments made in the previous inspection in 2012 when the overall effectiveness for Safeguarding was rated 'Outstanding', with Looked After Children being 'Good.'

4.1.5 The new Inspection arrangements are undoubtedly more stringent than previous inspections and it is positive that the grading of good has remained for Looked after Children. Inspectors noted however a deterioration in standards for children in need of early help and protection.

4.1.6 At the time of presentation of this report 68 authorities have had inspection reports published under this framework and of these the gradings were as follows:

- Outstanding – 0
- Good – 16
- Requires improvement 36
- Inadequate – 16

### **4.2 Recommendations**

4.2.1 As outlined within the report there are 9 recommendations:

- 3 recommendations relate to Early Help
- 3 recommendations relate directly to social work practice

- 1 recommendation relates directly to Child Sexual Exploitation
- 1 recommendation regarding Governance
- 1 recommendation relates to performance management and information systems.

4.2.2 The 9 detailed inspection recommendations are outlined below:

1. Improve governance arrangements so that there is effective oversight, support and challenge of children's services by the local authority's Children and Young People's Select Committee and the Corporate Parenting Panel to drive and monitor service improvement.
2. Review processes within the duty team to ensure that systems to manage contacts and referrals, including domestic abuse notifications, are secure and enable social workers and other professionals to keep children and young people safe and protected, in a timely manner.
3. Ensure that a revised early help strategy is implemented so that early help is effectively targeted, coordinated and evaluated so that families receive appropriate support when need is first identified.
4. Take action to improve information and intelligence sharing across partners regarding children at risk of sexual exploitation and/or going missing and use this to improve prevention and disruption activity.
5. Improve performance management and information systems to ensure that managers at all levels have timely, relevant and accurate performance information to enable them to work effectively and deliver a consistently good service.
6. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of step-up and step-down arrangements between early help and children's social care to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to improve services.
7. Ensure that all plans for any child or young person receiving a service: focus on reducing risk; identify the needs of all children in the family; and are understood by parents and young people. Plans should be specific, measurable and time-bound.
8. Ensure that initial strategy discussions include relevant professionals to inform timely decision-making and planning in child protection investigations, as required by guidance.
9. Ensure that life story work is completed for those children and young people in long-term care who need to know and understand their life histories.

### **4.3 Improvement plan and delivery**

4.3.1 The outcomes of the Inspection have been shared with elected members, partners, managers and front line staff within the Local Authority. An Inspection seminar has been held with the Lead Ofsted Inspector and senior officers and partners on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to discuss detailed aspects of the inspection outcome as is customary practice.

4.3.2 From the date of publication of the inspection report on 20<sup>th</sup> January the Local Authority has 70 days to prepare and forward an Improvement Plan to Ofsted; this understandably will be reviewed by Ofsted to measure progress at the next scheduled inspection, the improvement plan is attached as Appendix B.

4.3.3 The plan has nine areas of focus in line with the inspection recommendations but also addresses some of the additional development areas highlighted within the text of the report that did not lead to a formal recommendation. Work has already been initiated to address the recommendations as detailed within the plan, this includes:

- The creation of a multi-agency Early Help Board, the first meeting was held in January, dedicated staff have been aligned to assist the delivery of this.
- A review of our CSE arrangements with proposals for change due to be presented to the next Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board in March.
- Four development sessions with our Corporate Parenting board to refresh Governance arrangements and associated delivery for services to our Looked After Children; the first of these was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016.
- Development of a Comprehensive workforce strategy to assist in consistency of social work interventions and best practice to protect and support vulnerable children and young people. A Strategy group has been created and workforce surveys have been completed to inform the strategy.
- A review of performance information has been initiated to ensure integrity of information and that the right information is available to the right people to inform good analysis and decision making. In association with this the IT platform for Lewisham was singled out for hampering service development and delivery, as such the improvement plan addresses the need for the roll out of Thin Client in April/May 2016 to promote greater stability as well as to allow usage of the most current release of the Liquid Logic system used for social care casework recording. The partnership with LB Brent also offers the exciting opportunity to enable mobile working and to harness digital technology to maximise efficiency and costs. This will be supported by work to develop the 'performance culture' that Ofsted identified was lacking.

#### **4.4 Monitoring and reporting arrangements**

4.4.1 The implementation of the Improvement Plan will be monitored by Children and Young People (CYP) Departmental Management Team (chaired by the Executive Director CYP) as well as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and will be subject to quarterly progress reporting until completion. Co-ordination of the plan will be provided by the Corporate Strategy Unit and additional monitoring reports will also be made to the Children's Social Care Senior Management Team as well as the CYP Departmental Management Team. The priorities within the Improvement Plan are aligned with the Children's Social Care Business Plan 2016-17 and well as the borough Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18.

#### **5. Financial implications**

5.1 The plan is being implemented within existing budgets. It is the case, however, that the Children's Social Care budget continues to overspend on looked after children's placements and Section 17 costs. The Director of CSC is working with finance colleagues to develop a financial recovery plan for this area of work and improving the impact and effectiveness of early help (a key part of the improvement plan) is fundamental to this.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 Lewisham provide services to Children and Young People under a range of statutory provisions. There are no particular legal implications arising from this report. As service developments are introduced, the specific legal implications of any proposals will be considered as they arise.

## **7. Crime and disorder implications**

- 7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1 Children's social care services aim to protect and improve the life chance of the most vulnerable children in the borough. This includes services for children with disabilities.

## **9. Environmental implications**

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report.

## **10. Background documents**

- 10.1 None.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact **Stephen Kitchman (Director of Children's Social Care)** on 0208 3143996